RONNIE ROCKET
OR
The Absurd Mystery of
The Strange Forces of Existence
by
David Lynch

Adaptation by Eric C. Johnson
Illustrated by Byron Dunbar

(First Draft)

PAGE ONE.

ONE PANEL – SPLASH PAGE.

Panel 1 – An enormous, 200 foot tall stage, with tiny lights and front row seats to show the scale. Lush, black curtains are pulled back to show a stage filled with FIRE, a wall of flame from stage floor to the rafters. Within the fire are FACES, souls screaming out in agony.

At the top of the page, overlaid atop the flames:

TEXT (1): In bold, three dimensional text with red on top and black on the sides, surrounded by blue and white electricity, the words RONNIE ROCKET appear, jutting outwards right to left.

At the bottom of the page, underneath the front row seats:

TEXT (2): OR, THE ABSURD MYSTERY OF THE STRANGE FORCES OF EXISTENCE.

TEXT (3): BY DAVID LYNCH; ADAPTATION BY ERIC C. JOHNSON; ILLUSTRATED BY BYRON DUNBAR.

PAGE TWO.

TWO WIDE PANELS, FOLLOWED BY TWO ROWS OF TWO PANELS.

Panel 1 – Wide shot of THE CITY. A soot-covered city, where it is darkest night. Only a few tiny yellow squares of light in the old buildings and factories. Everything is so dark. Very little life is noticed except the tiny dark yellow squares. There are no cars seen from this high angle looking down over the city. No people out this night.

Panel 2 - A closer look at some of the buildings reveals a thirties style architecture, although quite plain and very massive. Office buildings with heavy industrial factories. A smokestack pours tons of heavy black smoke slowly and silently into the dark night sky. Hundreds of heavy electrical wires crisscross through the sky. From giant boxes on the poles:

SFX: HUM! HUM!

Panel 3 – Close-up of headlights.

Panel 4 – A 1950s style car drives down a deserted, dark street. In the background is an old fashioned diner with a neon sign saying "CITY DINER."

Panel 5 – A large, old fashioned style hospital and steps leading up them.

Panel 6 – A long, empty hospital hallway. In the distance, there is a silhouette of a half-vanished nurse wheeling a patient somewhere else. Behind them, at the very back of the corridor, is an open steel door.

PAGE THREE.

DITKO STYLE NINE PANEL GRID.

Panel 1 – A flight of concrete stairs going down to the basement.

Panel 2 – Another hospital corridor. In contrast to the first one, reasonably maintained, this one is incredibly dark and decayed, with almost no lighting, paint peeling off the walls, and rusted water pipes. Small puddles have formed underneath them.

SFX: DRIP! DRIP!

At the bottom of the panel is a steady stream of sound from the machinery that runs the hospital:

SFX: RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 3 – Still in this dank corridor, we peek inside one, small room that seems to be occupied, although we can't quite make out what he looks like. The name on the outside says RONALD DE ARTÉ.

SFX: RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 4 – Front view. In the bed, under the white sheets, lays RONALD DE ARTÉ who, because of some strange unnamed happening is now here quite disfigured. He wears a hospital robe and is hooked up to electrical machinery next to his bed with IVs. There is no human form to him really except he does have arms and legs, but they're under the sheets. The chest and head area are very strangely shaped, but there is a hole for a mouth and a nose. In the mouth there are teeth and a tongue which moves. There are two eyes above the nose hole. The eyes dart back and forth.

Panel 5 – From Ronald's perspective or an over the shoulder view, he looks out into the door and the long, empty corridor.

SFX (only visible through the gap in the door): -RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR-

Panel 6 – The exact same shot, except now, someone is INSIDE the room, standing over Ronald's bed and looking down on him, almost as if just appeared. He wears black pants and shoes, a white shirt, and a black jacket which is now hanging on a rack over against the cement wall. Over his shirt, he wears leather straps and a shoulder holster which supports a .38 pistol under his arm. This is the Detective.

SFX (only visible through the gap in the door): -RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR-

Panel 7 – From the Detective's perspective, the shape that is Ronald looks up at him in fear.

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh

Panel 8 – From Ronald's perspective, the Detective continues to look at him, expression unchanged.

Panel 9 – Ronald looks downwards at the small table next to his hospital bed, containing a blank piece of paper and a pencil. His hand points at it as well.

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh

PAGE FOUR.

DITKO STYLE NINE PANEL GRID.

Panel 1 – The Detective picks up the paper off the table.

Panel 2 – He hands it to Ronald, whose arm is contorted at an odd angle in order to grasp it from him.

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh

Panel 3 – Ronald slams his hand on the table. The pencil on the table jumps in the air.

SFX: THUMP! THUMP!

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh!

Panel 4 – The Detective, expressionless.

Panel 5 – Ronald continues to slam.

SFX: THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh! eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh!

Panel 6 – Close-up of the pencil on the table jumping in the air.

Panel 7 – The Detective, realizing with a tiny ! next to his head.

Panel 8 – The Detective hands Ronald the pencil.

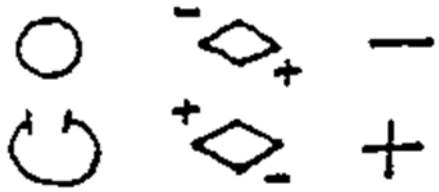
RONALD: EEEEEEEEEEEEHHHH! EEEEEEEEEEEEHHHH!

Panel 9 – Ronald scribbles onto the paper, motion lines coming from his hands to show his shaking.

PAGE FIVE.

ONE WIDE PANEL, FOLLOWED BY TWO ROWS OF THREE PANELS.

Panel 1 – A wide close-up of the paper Ronald has drawn on, showing these symbols (possibly directly pasted from this image):



Panel 2 – From Ronald's perspective, the Detective takes the paper from Ronald.

Panel 3 – Same shot as before, but now the Detective is on the other side of the room, reading the paper underneath a small lamp.

Panel 4 – Same shot. Putting the now folded paper into his pocket, the Detective walks back over to Ronald.

Panel 5 – From the Detective's perspective, looking down on Ronald.

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh

Panel 6 – The Detective leans in closer to Ronald.

RONALD: eeeeeeeeeeeehhhh

Panel 7 – Close-up of Ronald's eyes.

PAGE SIX.

DITKO STYLE NINE PANEL GRID.

POTENTIALLY: Overlaid over the entire nine panel grid would be a very, very faint, ghost-like close-up of Ronald's face. Abandon if it looks silly or too close to Lynch doing the same thing in *The Return*, but could look different in comic form.

Panel 1 – From Ronald's perspective, the Detective walks away, grabbing his coat from a coat rack in the room.

SFX (only visible through the gap in the door): -RRRRRRRRRRRRRRR-

Panel 2 – Same angle as Pg. 3 Panel 3 outside of Ronald's door in the hallway. The Detective looks left, coat half on.

SFX: RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 3 – Same angle as before. The Detective looks right, coat all the way on.

SFX: RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 4 – The empty corridor and the Detective's back as he walks down it.

SFX: RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 5 – Outside the hospital exterior, the Detective walks into the street, no one else in the shot,

Panel 6 – The Detective walks towards a large, abandoned building on the other side of the street.

Panel 7 – The Detective hides behind a pillar on the building, looking back at the hospital.

Panel 8 – Same angle as the previous Panel 5. No one is outside the hospital or on the street.

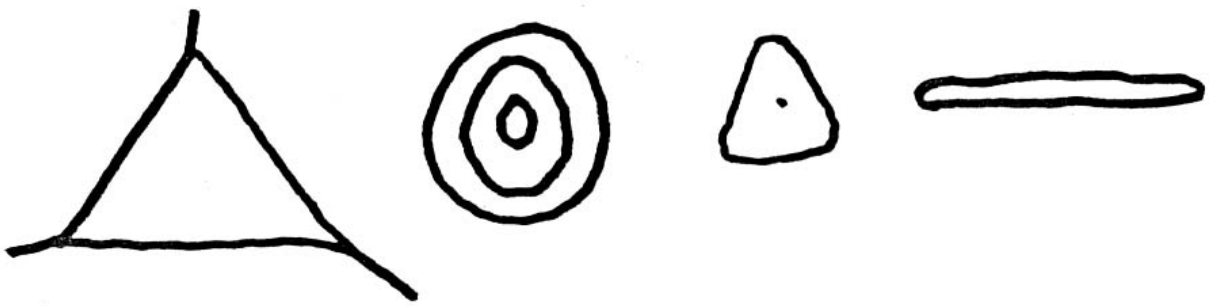
Panel 9 – The Detective looking relieved.

Lynch's Description from Draft 1:

There is a dark land where mysteries and confusions abound, where fear and terror fly together in troubled cities of absurdities. Black clouds race by over a soot-covered city, where it is darkest night. Only a few tiny yellow squares of light in the old buildings and factories. Everything is so dark. Very little life is noticed except the tiny dark yellow squares. There are no cars seen from this high angle looking down over the city - no people out this night.

A closer look at some of the buildings reveals a thirties style architecture, although quite plain and very massive. Office buildings with heavy industrial factories. A smoke stack pours tons of heavy black smoke slowly and silently into the dark night sky. Hundreds of heavy electrical wires criss-cross through the sky and electric hums come from giant boxes on the poles. The headlights and then a car - it moves slowly below, down a street then turns out of sight. An old neon sign over a diner says "City Diner." A large old hospital and the front steps. Inside a nurse goes by wheeling a patient on a rolling bed. The corridor is now empty. Moving slowly through the empty corridor now to darker corridor. An open steel door. Down now two flights of cement stairs and down a dark and moist corridor now to a decaying subterranean distant hospital too. Down among the boiler room pipes we hear the heavy machinery that keeps the massive building operating. Entering the room we see a man, THE DETECTIVE, standing in pants and shoes, a white shirt, a black jacket which is now hanging on a rack over against the cement wall, and over his shirt, leather straps and a shoulder holster which supports a .38 pistol under the arm. He is standing, looking at the hospital bed. In the bed, under the white sheets, lays RONALD DE ARTE' who, because of some strange unnamed happening is now here quite disfigured. There is no human form to

him really except he does have arms and legs, but they're under the sheets. The chest and head area are very strangely shaped, but there is a hole for a mouth and a nose. In the mouth there are teeth and a tongue which moves. There are two eyes above the nose hole. The eyes dart back and forth. Ronald De Arte' is now making some sounds - very high pitched whines and is attempting to reach a piece of paper which lies on a moveable steel tale next to his bed. The Detective moves in closer and hands the paper to Ronald who contorts in order to get his arm over to it. More high pitched whines and a knocking of his hand on the table near a pencil which leaps with every hit lets the Detective know that Ronald now requires a pencil with which to write. Ronald very shakily scribbles out the following symbols and all the while he makes very long, high pitched whines:



The Detective takes the paper and looks the symbols over. He folds the paper and continues to hold it as he turns toward Ronald again. He comes up closer to Ronald. Ronald makes some more noises. The Detective now is very close to Ronald looking into his eyes. Very faintly the big close up of Ronald stays double exposed as the Detective turns, gets his coat and goes quickly out of the room. Putting on his coat he looks suspiciously, left and right down the dark corridor - no one - he goes down the hall and disappears around the corner. No one is on the street as he crosses it to a large building where he stops and turns back to see if anyone is following him. He looks carefully all around him. Satisfied with the situation as it is, he turns back again and goes down the street into the darkness. Ronald's CU fades.

<u>Lynch's Description from Draft 2</u>:

There is a dark land where mysteries and confusions abound, where fear and terror fly together in troubled cities of absurdities.

Black clouds race by over a soot-covered city, where it is darkest night. Only a few tiny yellow squares of light in the old buildings and factories. Everything is so dark. Very little life is noticed except the tiny dark yellow squares. There are no cars seen from this high angle looking down over the city--no people out this night.

A closer look at some of the buildings reveals a thirties style architecture, although quite plain and very massive. Office buildings with heavy industrial factories. A smoke stack pours tons of heavy black smoke slowly and silently into the dark night sky. Hundreds of heavy electrical wires crisscross through the sky and electricity hums come from giant boxes on the poles. The headlights and then a car--it moves slowly below, down a street then turns out of sight. An old neon sign over a diner says "City Diner." A large old hospital and the front steps. Inside a nurse goes by wheeling a patient on a rolling bed. The corridor is now empty. Moving slowing through the empty corridor. An open steel door.

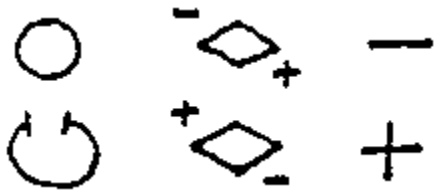
Down now two flights of cement stairs and along a dark and moist corridor off of which sit decaying subterranean hospital rooms. We hear the heavy machinery that keeps the massive building operating. Pipes leak rusted festering water into puddles on the cold floor.

Entering one of these small decaying rooms we see an old hospital bed. A dim name tag on the end of the bed bears the name RONALD DE ARTE'.

In the bed, under the white sheets, lays RONALD DE ARTE' who, because of some strange unnamed happening is now here quite disfigured. There is no human form to him really except he does have arms and legs, but they're under the sheets. The chest and head area are very strangely shaped, but there is a hole for a mouth and a nose. In the mouth there are teeth and a tongue which moves. There are two eyes above the nose hole. The eyes dart back and forth.

Suddenly, and quite mysteriously there is a detective now standing in this room. He wears black pants and shoes, a white shirt, a black jacket which is now hanging on a rack over against the cement wall. Over his shirt, he wears leather straps and a shoulder holster which supports a .38 pistol under his arm. He is standing, looking at the hospital bed. Ronald De Arte' is now making some sounds--very high pitched whines and is attempting to reach a piece of paper which lies on a moveable steel tale next to his bed. The Detective moves in closer and hands the paper to Ronald who contorts in order to get his arm over to it. More high pitched

whines and a knocking of his hand on the table near a pencil which leaps with every hit lets the Detective know that Ronald now requires a pencil with which to write. Ronald very shakily scribbles out the following symbols and all the while he makes very long, high pitched whines:



The Detective takes the paper to a small lamp across the room and looks the symbols over. He folds the paper and continues to hold it as he turns toward Ronald again. He comes up closer to Ronald. Ronald makes some more noises. The Detective now is very close to Ronald looking into his eyes. Very faintly the big close up of Ronald stays double exposed as the Detective turns, gets his coat and goes quickly out of the room. Putting on his coat he looks suspiciously, left and right down the dark corridor--no one--he goes down the hall and disappears around the corner. No one is on the street as he crosses it to a large building where he stops and turns back to see if anyone is following him. He looks carefully all around him. Satisfied with the situation as it is, he turns back again and goes down the street into the darkness. Ronald's CU fades.